Socialists in the Colleges.

With a number of people having left college in the last year we are starting in many colleges with only one or two members. Our aim should to turn this into half a dozen or so in the smaller colleges and ten or twelve in the bigger colleges.

The key to operating successfully as socialists inside as it is outside college is to combine activity with political argument.

Conditions in the colleges are deteriorating and this creates the possibility of outbursts of anger.

However we should not be obsessed with the idea of launching the big campaign against overcrowding etc

We are a small minority among the student population and we should remember it. We are not in a position to launch major campaigns on our own. Serious campaigns which develop we should support and argue the way forward. We should not imagine we are going to dictate the outcome of events nor that May 68 is around the corner.

In any campaign we are trying to relate to the best fighters and argue with them why to change things in college you need to fight the entire system. In other words we are out to talk politics to people and win them to revolutionary socialism.

The nature of college even more so than outside is that struggle will be very up and down. Therefore convincing people of arguments and winning them to ideas will be the key to building a strong socialist presence in the colleges.

This is particularly important when it comes to new members. The pressure in college is always towards individualism, obsession with exams and careers etc. Also while Marxist ideas are often referred to in courses they are usually dismissed as wrong by lecturers. Under these pressures and in the absence of major struggle we will only keep people in the party if we talk politics.

When someone joins we should arrange to meet them immediately to explain what we stand for and sell them a copy of "The Case For Socialism." We should follow this up by always talking politics to new members, finding out what they think about various issues etc. Understandably people will not be ethusiastic about the routines of the organisation unless they understand the political arguments behind them.

Also we should not imagine that the only place or even the most important place to argue our politics is in campaigns.

Colleges are places of ideas. We will have opportunities to argue socialist politics in tutorials, in classes, among our friends and we should do so.

Encouraging members to read and having a good bookstall should be an important aspect of the SWSS groups activity. In particular we should push the Socialist Review and the ISJ (Our theoretical journal) which will be very helpful in deepening members understanding of the politics.

Well organised weekly meetings with interesting topics relating to course material and topical issues should be a central concern for us in the colleges. Speakers and topics should be organised well in advance to ensure high quality meetings. This still allows us to be flexible if there is a particularly important issue that comes up.

We should in addition organise a weekly stall where we campaign on important issues, sell the paper and books and advertise the weeks meeting.

SWSS members should meet briefly early in the week to organise these activities.

Where there is more than one member in a college, responsibility for different tasks should be divided out among the members. Convenor (responsible for phoning around members, organizing speakers and meetings.) Paper Organizer(Responsible for ensuring all members and contacts receive their paper) Stall organizer(responsible for weekly stall). Treasurer(responsible for subs and SWSS accounts).

Comrades in the colleges should see the building of a strong group in their college as their main task for the organisation. They should not take on major responsibilities in the branch at the expense of organising in the college.

This does not mean students should ignore normal branch work. On the contrary it is important that all comrades operating in the colleges get to their branch meetings and saturday stalls. Students who do not understand the need to link up with workers and forces outside the college will eventually drift away from socialist politics. The branch meeting is the bridge between students, workers , the unemployed etc. It is also important that students do some industrial work. All SWSS groups should therefore sell the paper fortnightly at a local workplace.

Establishing basic routines around meetings, the paper and stalls

are the essential scaffolding of a successful SWSS group no matter how small. Campaigning around important issues is also vital if we are to meet those who want to fight. However these things alone are not enough. Talking politics and generalising from the specific issue to the need to fight the system as a whole is the way in which we will build and maintain a strong socialist presence in the colleges.

Freshers Week

We need to go mental on recruiting people to SWSS in the first few weeks. Whether or not there is a former freshers day/week there will be loads of new students interested in ideas that we can talk to and get to join.

Things to do.

Make sure you have booked a stall(if that is neccessary) and a room for your first meeting well in advance.

Get people who are available from the branch to help out.

Ensure that you have a good bookstall organised in advance. (see below)

Get there early on the day or week and set up a good display and stall. SWSS leaflets, posters and displays are available from the centre.

Posters for your first meeting and the Join SWSS posters should be up well in advance.

Top priority is recruitment to SWSS - get names, addresses and a sub from anyone who expresses an interest. These people will provide the political base from which we can build in the college.

Send in a list of all the new members to the centre.

Follow up new members quickly.

Bookstall - Books you need.

The Economics of the Madhouse.

The Case For Socialism

The Famine.(pamphlet)

Race and Class.

Killing the Nazi Menace.(pamphlet)

Sex, Class and Socialism

The struggle for Women's Liberation(pamphlet)

Abortion - Why Irish Women have the right to choose.(pamphlet)

The Revolutionary Ideas of karl Marx.

the Communist Manifesto

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.

Socialists and Gay Liberation.(pamphlet)

Russia - How the Revolution was Lost(pamhlet)

Latest ISJ and Socialist Review.